



# Focus on Fleet

*"There's no such thing as Government money. There is only Taxpayer money."*

**Spring 2004**

*A publication of the SC Budget and Control Board  
General Services Division, Office of State Fleet Management*

## From the State Fleet Manager

Did you ever feel like you were living the same day over and over again, like in that movie *Groundhog Day*?

Sometimes I do. You see, in the last several issues of *Focus on Fleet* we have run stories about the rising cost of gasoline. In fact, there's another one in *this* issue.

But the story remains current because, in fact, gasoline prices keep going up. And not just gasoline, but also diesel, kerosene, heating oil, and so on. It just costs more and more to get your vehicle (and our State vehicles) from Point A to Point B. In fact, it is as expensive now as it has ever been, and it's probably going to get worse before it gets any better.

So before you get behind the wheel of your State vehicle, ask yourself (in World War II fashion), "Is this trip really necessary?" You could carpool; group errands into one trip rather than several; or cut back on outside trips in general in order to save on fuel.

There is one other thing you may be able to do to save money, if not fuel. If you are one of the many State drivers with access to a Flex-Fuel Vehicle (FFV), you could actually use Ethanol in it instead of gasoline.

Why would I mention this? There are lots of reasons to use alternative fuels, of course, but why especially now?

First of all, alternative fuels — without exception, including Biodiesel — burn cleaner than all-petroleum fuels. The result of using them is that fewer pollutants are released into the atmosphere. Especially now, with summer coming on fast, it is good to take steps to keep the air as clean as we can.

Second, when we actually use alternative fuels in our FFVs, the State gets Federal Alternative Fuel Credits that go toward satisfying our requirements under EPAct92, which requires government fleets to purchase AFVs. From model year 2002 on, State government is required to purchase AFVs for 75% of its qualifying light duty vehicles.

Finally, there will soon be more Alternative Fuel available. There is already a station operated by DHEC at 2600 Bull Street, and a commercial station in Aiken. Soon, though, two commercial stations in Columbia will be offering E-85 with their other fuels. One is located at the corner of Bull and Gervais Streets; the other is on Bluff Road at I-77. Details will be forthcoming.

Most surprising of all: **E-85 is now less expensive than regular gasoline.** Thanks in part to a Federal subsidy, you can now run your FFV on "corn juice" for less than you would spend on gas. And that, my friends, is welcome news.

So remember — help keep the air clean; help the State generate AFV credits; and also, SAVE some MONEY, for the State or for yourself.

With that in mind, no matter what happens...

*...Y'all be safe out there!*

*—Gerald W. Calk  
State Fleet Manager*

## New Replacement Criteria

In addition to lowering lease rates on mature vehicles, SFM has also revised the replacement criteria as shown below.

Compact Sedan	100,000
Intermediate Sedan	110,000
Full Size Sedan	125,000
Executive Sedan	125,000
Full Size Police Sedan	125,000
Intermediate Station Wagon	125,000
Mini Passenger Van	125,000
12-Passenger Van	150,000
15-Passenger Van	150,000
Mini Cargo Van	125,000
Full-Size Cargo Van	150,000
Intermediate Utility 4x2	125,000
Intermediate Utility 4x4	125,000
Full Size Utility 4x2	125,000
Full Size Utility 4x4	125,000
Compact Pickup	125,000
Full-Size ½-ton Pickup	150,000
Full-Size ¾-ton Pickup 4x2	150,000
Full-Size ¾-ton Pickup 4x4	150,000
Handicap Van (30K GVWR)	175,000
Handicap Bus	200,000
14-Passenger Minibus	175,000

## Inside Focus on Fleet:

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- It Costs How Much? Gas Prices at Home and Abroad (p. 2)

# Focus on Safety: Dangerous Road

The road is the single most dangerous place for American workers, according to a study by the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

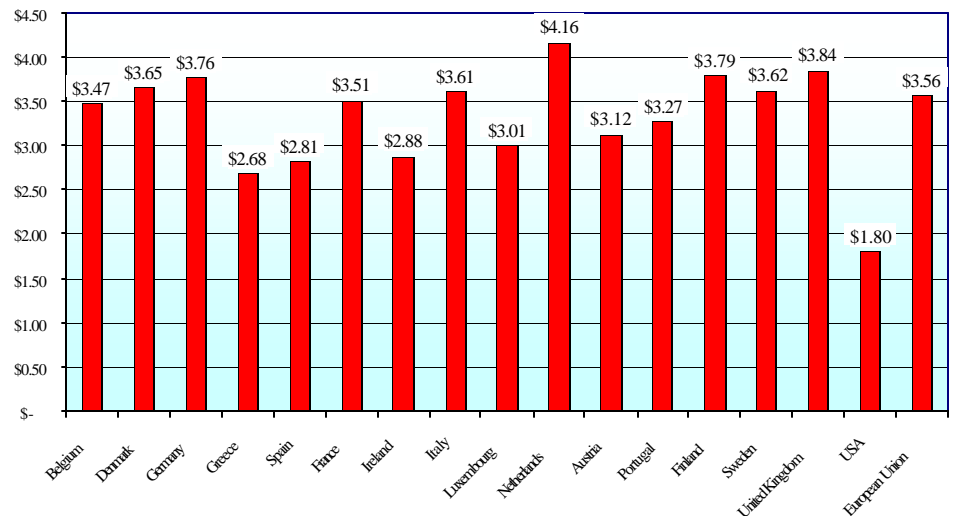
While workplace deaths have generally declined over the last ten years, work-related driving fatalities actually rose, accounting for 22 percent of all worker deaths. Some nine out of ten driving deaths were male, and men's fatality rate was six times as high as that of women.

Some drivers were also lax about safety: some eight percent had been drinking, and 72% of the fatalities **were not wearing safety belts**. It's also very dangerous to hit a larger vehicle: while an average of 681 heavy-truck drivers are killed in accidents every year, those who collide with large trucks die at the rate of about 4,455 a year.

The author of the study is an epidemiologist with the National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH). She says that deadline pressure, fatigue, and not being familiar with the vehicle or the area in which one was driving contributed to the risk of a work-related vehicle accident.

Remember - Defensive Driving pays!

Gas Prices in Europe  
as of 7 May 2004



## It costs How Much?

### Gas Prices at Home and Abroad

Let's face it, America: We are Spoiled.

Yes, gasoline costs a good deal more than it used to cost. Yes, we would rather it were less expensive. But when you look at how much other countries have to pay, our burden seems, well, a lot less burdensome.

If we lived in any European country, we could be paying well over twice the current price of unleaded. If you take a look at the chart above, you will see that unleaded costs \$3.47 a gallon in Belgium and some \$4.16 a gallon in the Netherlands.

Why is it so expensive?

According to the publication *Les Prix DIREM: Prix et marges des produits pétroliers en France et dans l'Union Européenne*, the price of a gallon of gasoline consists of the price of the materials (about \$1.14 per gallon; remember, fuel can be transported via pipeline, considerably reducing transportation costs) plus \$2.42 in taxes. Yes, that's right — more than two thirds of the price of fuel in Europe is taxes.

On the other hand, in South Carolina our tax burden is only \$0.3515 per gallon — fortunately it isn't calculated as a percentage of the price, because if it were, gasoline would be a lot more expensive than it is right now. Note that the tax burden includes \$0.1675 for State taxes and \$0.184 for Federal taxes. Users of the State fuel card, however, are exempt from these taxes for fuel used in State vehicles.

So as you can see, gas is getting higher; in fact, US Crude oil prices set another record at over forty dollars a barrel last Friday (14 May). But even \$2.00 a gallon is still better by far than the three to four dollars a gallon it costs in Europe.

So as burdensome as it seems, cheer up — it could be a lot worse!

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Focus on Fleet is published four times a year by the South Carolina Budget and Control Board, General Services Division, State Fleet Management, 1022 Senate Street, Columbia, SC 29201-3160.

# Bill Page: An Appreciation

On Wednesday, 28 January scores of guests trudged through snow and ice to express their best wishes to Bill Page on his retirement. The snow and ice were remnants of the snowstorm that had blanketed much of the State over the previous few days.



*Bill stops to smell the roses.*

Bill Page first came to work for State Fleet when it was still called the Division of Motor Vehicle Management. At that time it was an independent Division under the Budget and Control Board. Bill had served over twenty years in the United States Army, serving in Viet Nam, the Dominican Republic, and Germany. He retired in 1978 as a Chief Warrant Officer.

In an interview for another story in the Spring 2003 *Focus on Fleet*, Bill recalled a story about how the Army had asked him in Viet Nam to come up with a process for making dehydrated cooked rice. Fulfilling that request helped to sharpen Bill's logistical skills.

In that same interview, he recalled that he really enjoyed his Army career. He enjoyed serving as a Chief Warrant Officer because CWOs were "recognized technical expert[s]" in their field.

The most amazing thing about Bill Page, however, is his never-ending quest to improve things. As the story about learning to dehydrate rice shows, Bill never gave up until things were better. That was true when he was in the Army, and he brought

that same determination with him to State Fleet.

Among Bill's numerous improvements here are the Commercial Vendor Repair Program, which began in 1989 and is still saving the State loads of money; the Image Web system, which saves numerous labor hours in filing and retrieval of information on individual vehicles in the CVRP; and, to a sizable extent, the South Carolina Equipment Management Information System (SCEMIS). While others did the actual programming of the system, Bill played an important part not only in shaping the initial product, but in the continual innovations to the system. Some of his ideas for SCEMIS are still being enacted, such as the Manufacturer Recall System and some other improvements.

We already miss Bill here at State Fleet. In all my days of working with computers and computer people (including a few math majors), I have never encountered anyone who had the encyclopedic grasp of the meaning of numbers that Bill has. He can look over a fleet report and analyze it mentally faster than most people could even read it.

This peculiar mathematic genius carried Bill through his entire career, no doubt; and I have no doubt that (wherever he is this week) he is still analyzing the figures from diesel and oil consumption in his motor home, as well as the bandwidth statistics on his satellite receiver.

Aside from the math skills, however, Bill is also a skilled and respected manager of the people who worked for him, a respected and well-liked colleague, and a



*Bill receives a gift from the Maintenance Team, presented by Eleese Portee*

man who takes no nonsense from anyone. I pity the fool who tries to sell him an unnecessary service on that motor home!

As a small testimony to the admiration and respect of his colleagues and friends, we present the photos on this page from his retirement reception.

*Jonathan Eason  
Editor*



*Well-wishers gather at the hors d'œuvres table at Bill's Retirement reception.*

General Services Division  
State Fleet Management  
1022 Senate Street  
Columbia, SC 29201



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## Staff News

- CVRP Procurement Specialist **Greg Trapp** has accepted a position with a private sector firm. His last day with us at State Fleet was 30 January.
- **Steve Dyer**, another CVRP Procurement Specialist, has accepted a position with Mack Trucks at their campus in Maryland. His last day will be 21 May.
- **Kiala Grate**, a Fiscal Tech I with the State Fleet Program Support Team, has accepted a position with a firm in Charlotte, North Carolina. Her last day with State Fleet will also be Friday, 21 May.

- In the wake of **Bill Page**'s retirement, the Maintenance area has been divided into two Teams, and responsibilities have been slightly redistributed.

**Elease Portee** is the new Team Leader for Maintenance, but will also retain her responsibilities regarding the Shop Certification program.

**Bob Amburgey** is now the Team Leader in charge of the Commercial Vendor Repair Program and supervises all the Procurement Specialists.

**Robert Seawright** has also remained in his position as head of the Central Transportation Maintenance Facility (CTMF).

- **Jeff Lindler**, a technician in the Central Transportation Maintenance Facility, also accepted a position in the private sector, leaving State Fleet in January.
- State Fleet welcomes CVRP Procurement Specialist **Joe Corley**, who joined SFM in May.
- Congratulations to **Melissia Stark**, a member of SFM's Compliance and Analysis Team. In October 2003 she received her Associate Public Manager Certificate from the Budget and Control Board's Office of Human Resources.

### Coming in the next *Focus on Fleet*:

- Budget Impact
- Legislative Recap
- More Exciting and Interesting Stories!